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THE PREVENTION OF CRUELTY TO ANIMALS

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THE first law for the prevention of cruelty to animals was passed by the British Parliament in 1822. It was known as Martin's Act, having been introduced and passed through the efforts of Mr. Richard Martin, a member of the House of Commons from Ireland. This law applied particularly to domestic animals, and was incomplete from the modern humane point of view. It was, nevertheless, an enormous advance over the ideas which had previously ruled throughout civilization in regard to recognition of the rights of animals and their protection from cruelty. It may properly be called the Magna Charta of the animal world.

This recognition of man's duty to the lower orders of creation was not accepted without a bitter fight. It antagonized the prevailing notions in regard to man's privilege to abuse his domestic animals, and it introduced a new idea into the scheme of civilization. It is true that great humanitarians in the past, even as early as the days of Plutarch, made strenuous appeals for kindly treatment for all harmless beasts. It remained, however, for an Anglo-Saxon legislative body to put into concrete form these abstract propositions which had haunted the minds of the merciful and philanthropic for many ages.

In 1824 the first society for the prevention of cruelty to animals was organized in London. This organization is still in existence and is known as the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. The anti-cruelty movement was first introduced into the United States through the efforts of Henry Bergh, who organized the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in New York city in 1866. Gradually the movement has spread all over the world and active societies for the protection of animals are to be found in almost every civilized land. Efficient societies are in operation in India,

Japan, Finland, Egypt, South Africa, South America, and throughout Europe and North America. In the United States alone there are 427 societies devoted wholly or in part to the prevention of cruelty to animals. In addition to these there are 44 societies devoted exclusively to the prevention of cruelty to children. Last year nearly one million six hundred thousand dollars were received for the support of anti-cruelty societies in this country and over twelve hundred paid employees were connected with the work. In addition there were over six thousand five hundred volunteer agents more or less active. Nearly a million and a half animals were reported as affected by this work in the United States during 1911.

The humane movement when first started undertook only to suppress cruelty to animals. Its scheme of activity was not nearly so complex then as now. At the present time many of the larger and wealthier societies are carrying on lines of work designed to afford other relief for animals and some societies are specializing, as for instance in the maintenance of animal shelters, homes of rest for horses and work-horse parades. Originally, humane literature was very limited in amount but now humane tracts are being distributed by hundreds of thousands, if not millions. The list of books inculcating humane principles has also become a long one and the titles alone fill pamphlets containing many pages.

Years ago practical humanitarians began to feel that if their work was to prove permanently successful, children should be interested in it. Accordingly, "bands of mercy" were formed, first in England and later in the United States. Millions of children have now become members of these bands. They are doing an active work in behalf of humanity by reporting cases to societies managed by adults, which investigate the complaints and often prosecute offenders. Books of recitations and plays have been prepared for these children and they serve to increase interest and enthusiasm. Banners, humane badges and not infrequently special rewards are offered to the children, with excellent results.

Both in England and in the United States, some attention has been given to offering a series of rewards for humane essays

prepared by school children. In some cities in the United States large numbers take part and essays are presented in competition which show intelligent interest and considerable discrimination. The prizes are adapted to the different grades of school children so that all may be attracted to compete. In London the distribution of such essay prizes to school children draws many thousands of them to the yearly gathering, which is usually honored by the presence of members of the royal family.

In the United States much attention has been given by societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals to the introduction of humane education in the public schools. Already fifteen states have compulsory humane education laws, and I believe that Massachusetts should also be added to this list on account of laws passed some time ago encouraging humane instruction in educational institutions. Chicago has now been operating under a humane education law for about two years, and Mrs. Ella Flagg Young, superintendent of schools in Chicago, wrote to me recently that

when the moral and humane education law was adopted by the legislature of the state of Illinois, it was at first thought by the school people that the plan of teaching humaneness as a definite subject of instruction in the schools was a mistake. In the intervening two years, however, there has been a change of opinion, and I think that now most of the school people, at least in Chicago, recognize the advantage of the definite presentation of this subject as a part of the course of study.

The Chicago board of education, on account of this state law, on March 23, 1910, adopted a scheme for humane education and moral training in the schools and presented an outline for such training accompanied by a list of books and periodicals that furnished material adapted to aid in such instruction. Humanitarians feel that to instruct a child in the principles of justice and kindness to the helpless or the weak does much to broaden the child's character and to increase its sympathy for that which is noble and good, and cannot fail to produce a better citizen for the future. It is a fixed principle of the policy of the anti-cruelty societies gradually to extend this system of

education into the public schools of every state, and plans have been definitely formulated for systematically carrying this work forward. We believe it a means for the promotion of good citizenship not to be ignored by persons who feel that the heart should be educated as well as the mind, and that the fundamental object of all education is the proper development of character.

The laws which have been enacted for the protection of animals cover a large variety of offenses and are more or less known to the general public. There are laws which provide that proper food and drink must be supplied to them; that disabled animals must not be abandoned or any animals carried in a cruel manner, whether in private vehicles or by common carriers; that substances injurious to animals shall not be thrown in public places; that cows shall not be kept in unhealthy places or fed improper food; that animal fights for sport shall be forbidden; and there are a number of special provisions designed to protect beasts from heedless or intentional cruelty.

The general policy of anti-cruelty legislation, however, has been not to legislate specially for every conceivable offense, but rather to provide general statutes designed to apply to most cases of abuse. As New York state was the first one to pass a special law for the protection of animals, its blanket statute has been largely copied in other states. Section 185 of the penal law of New York state is designed to cover all ordinary forms of cruelty and will serve as an example of the legal protection given to animals by a blanket statute. It reads in part as follows:

A person who overdrives, overloads, tortures or cruelly beats or unjustifiably injures, maims, mutilates or kills any animal, whether wild or tame, and whether belonging to himself or to another, or deprives any animal of necessary sustenance, food or drink, or neglects or refuses to furnish it such sustenance or drink, or causes, procures or permits, any animal to be overdriven, overloaded, tortured, cruelly beaten, or unjustifiably injured, maimed, mutilated or killed, or to be deprived of necessary food or drink, or who wilfully sets on foot, instigates, engages in, or in any way furthers any act of cruelty to any animal, or any act tending to produce such cruelty, is guilty of a misdemeanor.

This law has been amply sustained in the courts and is an efficient instrument for the protection of animals from most forms of abuse.

The New York state laws assist the enforcement of the section of the penal law just quoted, by providing two definitions which greatly increase the effectiveness of the law. Thus Section 180 declares that "the word 'animal,' as used in this article, does not include the human race, but includes every other living creature." This same section also provides that "the word 'torture' or 'cruelty' includes every act, omission, or neglect, whereby unjustifiable physical pain, suffering or death is caused or permitted." There are special laws for the protection of animals in railway transportation; also others relating to agricultural conditions and the licensing of dogs; while the game laws and other laws affecting wild animals are discriminating and in the main reasonable and effective.

There are two aspects of the anti-cruelty question which have received special consideration on the part of those who are deeply interested in its sociological value. The commercial or economic side of animal protection has been studied attentively and it has been calculated that the proper humane treatment of animals in the United States would result in savings amounting to hundreds of millions of dollars per annum. It is not possible to develop this aspect of the question in detail in a paper of limited length. The other general aspect of anti-cruelty work, to which I have just referred, deals with the reflex action on national character of the humanitarian movement. It was long ago felt that a greater moral harm was done to man himself, when guilty of cruelty to a beast, than was represented by the actual suffering of the creature. It was argued that man was degraded and debased by acts of cruelty and that the exercise of cruelty could not fail to have a powerful influence in a retrograde way on his social development.

Nero, the Roman Emperor, as a child, is said to have been diabolically cruel to animal life with which he came in contact. As the head of a great empire he only amplified and extended the cruelty which he had manifested as a youth. In a lesser but analogous way, we believe that this law of development

applies to those countries where the humane treatment of animals is discouraged, for humanitarians feel that humane education and the enforcement of laws for the better protection of helpless beasts has an important bearing on national character and national instincts.

The anti-cruelty societies are desirous of having public co-operation on the part of individuals and churches as far as possible, in carrying out the beneficent work in which they are engaged. Societies are desirous of establishing animal hospitals and free dispensaries in every large city, where intelligent and scientific care may be given to suffering animals, particularly those owned by the poor. Many a man of very limited means, who is dependent upon his horse for the support of himself and his family, does not feel that he can afford to pay the fee of a veterinarian for every slight ailment from which the animal may suffer. There is a large field for philanthropic work in the establishment and support, not alone of free dispensaries and animal hospitals, which are now beginning to spring up in the large cities, but also for the starting of courses of veterinary lectures so that all of those interested in horses, dogs, and others animals may obtain information how to care for them properly.

In New York, Chicago, and Boston, excellent courses of free lectures on the proper care of animals have been given for several years. These courses of instruction are attended to a considerable extent by the police, by drivers and horse owners, and by officers of the anti-cruelty societies. They have a large field of usefulness, as they aid those coming in contact with animals to treat them humanely and intelligently in health as well as in illness or disability.

Drinking fountains, from which animals may slake their thirst, especially during the heated term, are very desirable in all cities, and furnish an opportunity everywhere for those philanthropically inclined. Many humane societies lack veterinary ambulances, whereby injured or sick animals may be transported. Proper appliances for raising horses which have fallen into excavations are usually needed in connection with these ambulances. Many humane societies have such conveniences,

but the majority have not. An active movement is under way in some sections of the country to promote "horse vacations." This is based upon the belief that a short rest during the summer will increase the value of a horse's services during the rest of the year and prolong its life. It is based upon the supposition that what is good for a man is good also for a beast, as both have bodies which are substantially alike in their general anatomical construction and physiological functions. This idea will probably become more popular in the future.

Quite a number of societies have "homes of rest" for horses, where poor men may have their animals cared for, either gratuitously or at a nominal cost. We should advise persons interested in anti-cruelty work to offer farms, either by gift or loan, to humane societies so that they may be used for this purpose. Some enterprising anti-cruelty societies have undertaken to loan without charge horses which may be used by poor men who are dependent on their own animals for their living as an inducement for them to send their horses for a rest during the summer.

One of the greatest needs of anti-cruelty societies for animals throughout the United States is an adequate endowment. Societies which depend wholly on annual subscriptions for their support are always more or less in debt if their work is a large and active one. The largest and most efficient societies in this country are dependent for the major part of their income upon the interest from endowments. I know of no way in which the humanely inclined can do a greater service than by making testamentary provision toward the support of local anti-cruelty societies, so that they may not be hampered in their beneficent work. Many anti-cruelty societies in the past have died from financial starvation. The majority of them are so situated that a few earnest, hard-working philanthropists who are looking after the protection of the animals have to spend at least half of their humane working time in securing funds with which to finance their societies. Humanity is a general social duty. It is not the prerogative of the few. If persons humanely inclined are performing a duty which should be undertaken by the many, it is only fair that they should be more generously financed by

those who are able to extend help but whose work in this direction is being performed by others.

The anti-cruelty cause has suffered much in the past from a lack of trained workers. Earnest and enthusiastic partizans of the cause have often volunteered their services, and while meaning well have not infrequently antagonized both the public and the magistrates by their well-intended but impracticable demands. Many times men have been employed to enforce humane laws for animals who had become superannuated as policemen or deputy sheriffs, and who were destitute of any real interest or personal fitness for the work. Others employed have been those who have failed elsewhere and whose employment partakes very largely of the nature of a charity. Humanitarians are beginning to realize the error of such a policy as this and to feel that it is time that a special school should be started which shall fit the workers of anti-cruelty societies for their labors.

Society has trained workers for nearly every other philanthropic or business activity, as for instance, for social service, for nursing the sick, for every variety of technical employment, for bookkeeping and stenography, and so on through a long list. The humane worker is obliged to have a knowledge which is quite as technical and difficult as almost any of these. It is felt that a school is the only effective means of attracting young men and women of ability to enter this field of philanthropic endeavor and to perform efficient service.

A paid agent of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals should be familiar with the office management necessary for the successful carrying-on of an active society. He should be familiar with the needed office books and with the blanks required to receive complaints. He should know the proper methods of filing and should be drilled and disciplined in the carrying on of the more or less voluminous correspondence which is necessarily required. He should also be familiar with statistical methods, in order to present the results of the society's operations to its patrons. The humane worker should be taught how to keep up membership lists; how to incorporate anti-cruelty societies and legally conduct the same; how to keep

the minutes and records of the society and to prepare and publish annual reports.

In addition to all these things he must have the methods for field work well in hand. He must be more or less of a veterinarian and must understand the anatomy and physiology of the horse and other animals. He must be fitted to tell others how to relieve suffering animals, and be able to determine with a reasonable degree of exactness whether the animal is actually suffering or not, and whether the case is one which should be taken into court. Humane workers need to be wise in regard to the law, for they must plead their own cases in most instances; they must know how to draw legal papers and be familiar with legal procedure and the intricacies of the law; they must know what evidence is necessary in order to secure a conviction. It is desirable that an agent of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals should understand how to take photographs well; how to adjust ill-fitting harnesses; how to distinguish between a dog which is merely suffering from a fit or lack of water and one which is really vicious and dangerous. There are many other qualifications which are required and which can be secured only by special training.

Over and above all the humane agent must possess the milk of human kindness. He must be taught that the majority of offenders are cruel more because of ignorance than because of design, and that advice and friendly suggestion are what is needed in the vast majority of cases. Humane officers need to have enlightened good sense. They should be familiar with the latest and best methods of carrying on the work. It should be borne in mind, however, that all this theoretical knowledge is comparatively valueless unless supplemented by actual field work in connection with an active anti-cruelty society. It is desirable to have the theoretical foundation and the academic instruction for an officer, but in order to be properly fitted for his work he must go out on the street and into the police court, and learn actual methods by experience under the instruction of veteran workers. A school will be established in the near future through the efforts of the American Humane Association and we invite financial support for the development of this necessary work.